



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/708,575	11/09/2000	Akihiko Nakao	PM275334	2122
909	7590	06/03/2004	EXAMINER	
PILLSBURY WINTHROP, LLP			LE, BRIAN Q	
P.O. BOX 10500			ART UNIT	
MCLEAN, VA 22102			PAPER NUMBER	

2623

DATE MAILED: 06/03/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/708,575

Applicant(s)

NAKAO, AKIHIKO

Examiner

Brian Q Le

Art Unit

2623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 April 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 3 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 5-7 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,4 and 8-11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 09 November 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

Response to Amendment and Arguments

1. Applicant's amendment filed April 12, 2004, has been entered and made of record.
2. Applicant's arguments, see pages 13-14, filed April 12, 2004, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 1-3 under 35 U.S.C 102(b) have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Ikeda U.S. Patent No. 5,050,218.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikeda U.S. Patent No. 5,050,218 and further in view of discussed prior art by Ikeda "Background of the Invention".

Regarding claim 1, Ikeda teaches a location information recognition apparatus (address recognition) (Abstract, first line) for recognizing location information written on a letter and constituted by categories (Abstract), which form a hierarchical structure with a plurality of stages with country (address dictionary includes country, state, street, zip code etc...) (FIG. 3, element 5 and element 6) comprising:

Storing means storing dictionary of country and recognition procedures (FIG. 3, elements 6, 41 and 43), each of said recognition procedures corresponding to each category of the hierarchical structure with a plurality of stages of the location information (FIG. 3);

Art Unit: 2623

Selecting means selecting a dictionary and a procedure (FIG. 3, box 4, element 5 and element 6).

Recognizing means for recognizing the read location information using the selected dictionary in accordance with the recognition procedure selected by said selecting means (FIG. 4, FIG. 5a and FIG. 5b).

Ikeda does not clearly teach the concept of processing dictionaries of plurality of countries including with the means of storing, selecting and recognizing. However, Ikeda discloses (Background of the Invention) the teaching of prior arts regarding the processing of dictionaries (address dictionaries) of plurality of countries (column 1, lines 15-30) including the means of storing, selecting and recognizing (column 1 and column 2). Thus, it would have been obvious for one skilled in the art to combine the claimed limitation with the processing of dictionaries of plurality of countries so that letter/postal mail can be accurately distributed to various countries.

Regarding claim 2, please refer back to claim 1 for the explanation.

5. Claims 4, and 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikeda U.S. Patent No. 5,050,218 and further in view of Yui U.S. Patent No. 6,266,431.

Regarding claim 4, Ikeda teaches a location information recognition apparatus comprising:

Read means for reading a location information image (FIG. 3, element 1);

Line detection means for detecting one or some character lines from the location information image read by said read means (column 8, lines 28-29, 34, 38);

Art Unit: 2623

Region detection means for detecting one or some regions where location information is written from the location information image read by said read means (The detection of avenue, block, building, floor etc.. are the detection of each individual regions) (FIG. 5 (a), 'operation of block 34);

Location information word detection means for dividing the character line detected by said line detection means and included in the location information region detected by said region detection means into one or a plurality of word regions (column 8, lines 20-45);

Word recognition means for recognizing a word by comparing character information included in the word region obtained by said location information word detection means with a content of a word dictionary in which place names present in an area as a recognition target are registered (column 8, lines 45-68); and

Output means for outputting a recognition result by said word recognition means as a recognition result of the location information (column 4, lines 46-55).

However, Ikeda does not explicitly teach the concept of collation. Yui teaches a mail address recognition method that applies the collation method (abstract). Modifying Ikeda's method of location information recognition according to Yui would be able to confirm whether the corrected address exists or not with reference to an address information (abstract, last 3 lines). This would improve processing and therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Ikeda according to Yui.

For claim 8, Ikeda further teaches an apparatus wherein said recognizing means comprises (FIG. 4),

Read means reading a location information image (FIG. 3, elements 1 and 2);

Art Unit: 2623

Line detection means detecting one or some character lines from the location information image read by said read means (FIG. 4);

Region detection means detecting one or more regions where location information is written from the location information image read by said read means (FIG. 8);

Location information word detection means dividing the character line detected by said line detection means and included in the location information region detected by said region detection means into one or a plurality of word regions (FIG. 8);

Word recognition means recognizing a word by collating character information (comparing words or characters) included in the word region obtained by said location information word detection means with a content of a word dictionary in which place names present in an area as a recognition target are registered (FIG. 9); and

Output means outputting a recognition result of said word recognition means as a recognition result of the location information (column 4, lines 46-55 and column 6, lines 3-13).

Setting means for setting an order of recognition of words in each word region obtained by said location information word detection means, which corresponds to each category of the hierarchical structure with the plurality of stages constituting the location information (FIG. 4 and FIG. 5(a)), and

Second word recognition means (FIG. 4, word (2)) for recognizing the word by collating the character information (as discussed in claim 4) included in the word region obtained by said location information word detection means with a content of one of a plurality of word dictionaries in which different place names present in the area as the recognition target are

Art Unit: 2623

registered in units of categories in accordance with the order of recognition for each word region, which is set by said setting means (FIG. 4 and FIG. 5(b)), and

wherein output means outputting a recognition result corresponding to each category by said second word recognition means as the recognition result of the address information (column 6, lines 10-14; column 8, lines 15-20).

Regarding claim 9, please refer back to claim 8 for the explanation (memory is integral circuit).

For claim 10, please refer back to claim 8 for the explanation. In addition, Ikeda teaches word extraction means (FIG. 3, elements 1 and 2), corresponding to one of a plurality of word dictionaries in which different place names present in the area as the recognition target are registered in units of categories, for extracting one or a plurality of words in the word dictionary, the words matching at least some of a plurality of combinations of character strings constituted by the character information included in the word region obtained by said location information word detection means (FIG. 3; column 4, lines 5-13).

Regarding claim 11, please refer back to claim 10 for the explanation.

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 5-7 are allowed.

Art Unit: 2623

Conclusion

7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Art Unit: 2623

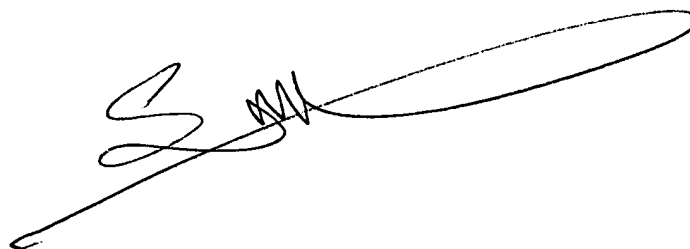
Contact Information

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian Q Le whose telephone number is 703-305-5083. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 A.M - 5:30 P.M.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Amelia Au can be reached on 703-308-6604. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9306 for regular communications and 703-872-9306 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-3900.

BL
May 18, 2004

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Ahmed', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**SAMIR AHMED
PRIMARY EXAMINER**